

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION

Claims 1-6 and 8 are active in the case.

The provisional rejection of Claims 9-14 under 35 U.S.C. §101 as claiming the same invention as that of Claims 1-7 of co-pending U.S. Application Serial No. 09/903,776 is traversed. In view of the cancellation of Claims 9-14 this rejection is moot.

The provisional rejection of Claims 9-14 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as anticipated by co-pending U.S. Application Serial No. 09/903,776 is traversed. In view of the fact that Claims 9-14 have been canceled this rejection is moot.

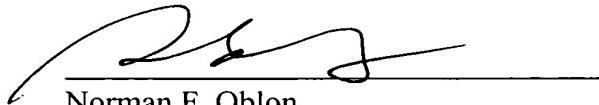
The rejection of Claims 1, 2, 4-6 and 8 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Albanese et al is traversed.

In view of the amendment of Claim 1 including the limitation of allowable Claim 7 therein, the claims distinguish over the reference.

It is submitted that Claims 1-6 and 8 are allowable and such action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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AMENDMENT AND REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Amended) A process for the synthesis of hydrogen cyanide, comprising:
reacting methane or methane-containing natural gas, ammonia and oxygen-enriched air or oxygen in the presence of a catalyst comprising platinum or a platinum alloy;
wherein oxygen and nitrogen are present in a molar ratio which satisfies the following relationship:

$$\frac{[O_2]}{[O_2+N_2]} = 0.25 \text{ to } 1.0;$$

wherein methane and ammonia are present in a molar ratio of

$$\frac{[CH_4]}{[NH_3]} = 0.95 \text{ to } 1.05;$$

and wherein a molar ratio of ammonia to the sum of oxygen and nitrogen [obeys]
satisfies the following relationship:

$$Y = m \cdot X - a,$$

wherein

$$Y = \frac{[NH_3]}{[O_2 + N_2]}$$

$$X = \frac{[O_2]}{[O_2 + N_2]}$$

m = 1.25 to 1.40[;] and

a = 0.05 to 0.14; and

wherein said methane-containing natural gas contains at least 88 vol.% of methane.

7. (Canceled).

9-14. (Canceled).